





ALEXEI JAWLENSKY

Edited by Vivian Endicott Barnett

With preface by Ronald S. Lauder, foreword by Renée Price,
and essays by Vivian Endicott Barnett, Angelica Jawlensky Bianconi,
Jill Lloyd, and Roman Zieglgänsberger

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PREFACE

Alexei Jawlensky is an important artist whose role in the development of German Expressionism has never been properly acknowledged. He was a favorite of my good friend and Neue Galerie Co-founder, Serge Sabarsky, and I have also been attracted to his work for many years. His paintings are marked by a strong palette, yet they are also imbued with a quiet spirituality.

Perhaps the closest artistic kin to Jawlensky is Vasily Kandinsky. The two shared a background as Russian artists who made their greatest advances working in Germany. Their time spent in Murnau in 1908 and afterwards yielded some of the key early modern works produced in Germany. I have been fortunate to acquire two exquisite Kandinsky works from this period, and seeing them calls to mind the intensely creative atmosphere in which they were developed. Without Kandinsky and Jawlensky, modern German art would never have attained its most brilliant form of expression.

In order to realize this important show, we have turned to the curator Vivian Endicott Barnett, who is an expert in both Kandinsky and Jawlensky. She has gathered a large number of major paintings in order to show Jawlensky in the best possible light. Her research gives us a better understanding of how this artist bridged his Russian upbringing and his German apprenticeship in art to create unique paintings. We are delighted to bring Jawlensky's work to the Neue Galerie, and offer Vivian Barnett our gratitude for her tireless work and great expertise.

My thanks to the exhibition and catalogue designers, Peter de Kimpe and Judy Hudson, for providing the perfect visual complement to this work. As always, I wish to extend my appreciation to Renée Price, director, and the entire staff of the Neue Galerie for realizing this exhibition, and in the process, bringing greater recognition to a major artist.

RONALD S. LAUDER

President, Neue Galerie New York

Alexei Jawlensky, *Self-Portrait with Top Hat*,
1904, oil on canvas. Private Collection



FOREWORD

Alexei Jawlensky (1864-1941) was an integral member of the avant-garde in Munich in the early twentieth century. Yet it would have been difficult to predict any such career based on his early experiences. Jawlensky was born in provincial Russia, and lived first near Minsk, where his father was stationed with the military, then in Moscow. He intended to follow in this pursuit, until he saw an exhibition at the age of 18 that awakened his sensibility and altered his path. At that moment, Jawlensky decided to dedicate his life to the pursuit of art.

Together with the artist Marianne von Werefkin, he joined the burgeoning art scene in Munich. They hosted a salon that included several Russian émigré artists. One of these was Vasily Kandinsky, who became a close confidant; another member of their circle was the Berlin-born Expressionist Gabriele Münter, Kandinsky's companion. The summer sojourn of these four friends to the lakeside Bavarian town of Murnau in 1908 was a crucial moment in the development in modern art. This was where the lessons of Vincent van Gogh—the move toward the use of pure color as an expressive vehicle—were first adopted in earnest, and quickly came into full flower.

Jawlensky believed in art as a spiritual calling, and his later work involved a series of canvases known as *Mystical Heads*, *Savior's Faces*, and *Abstract Heads*, which represented his search for an essential form conveying humility before a higher power. His final series of small *Meditations* may be considered modern icons of the twentieth century. He continued to work in this vein until 1938, when severe arthritis prevented him from painting, and he died in Wiesbaden in 1941. During his life, though, he had been a respected part of several important art movements, including the New Artists' Association of Munich (Neue Künstlervereinigung München) and later the Blue Four (Die Blauen Vier). We felt that Jawlensky's legacy as an artist is too little known, particularly in the United States.

To assemble this important exhibition of an artist's career spanning nearly fifty years, we have turned to esteemed curator, author, and recently elected Neue Galerie board member Vivian Endicott Barnett. Ms. Barnett is a distinguished art historian, author of the indispensable Vasily Kandinsky catalogue raisonné, *The Blue Four Collection at the Norton Simon Museum*, and co-editor of *The Blue Four: Feininger, Jawlensky, Kandinsky, and Klee in the New World*, which accompanied an exhibition on the subject at the Kunstmuseum Bern. She has brought her deep knowledge of the subject to bear in her extensive preparation of this exhibition, and tirelessly pursued key loans that would present the most complete picture of Jawlensky. We offer Vivian Barnett our sincere thanks.

We are very grateful for the support of Angelica Jawlensky Bianconi, who made possible numerous key loans to the exhibition, as well as access to the Jawlensky archives. Our gratitude also goes out to the many other lenders to this exhibition, from private and public collections both in the United States and internationally. These include ahlers collection, Art Institute of Chicago, Centre

Alexei Jawlensky, *Woman With Green Fan*,
1912, oil on board. Private Collection, Courtesy
Artvera's Gallery

Georges Pompidou, Des Moines Art Center, Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, Long Beach Museum of Art, Merzbacher Kunststiftung, Milwaukee Art Museum, Museum Wiesbaden, National Gallery of Art, Philadelphia Museum of Art, San Diego Museum of Art, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Sprengel Museum, Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus, Stiftung Im Obersteg, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, Zentrum Paul Klee, and numerous other lenders. The exhibition would not have been possible without their generosity.

All of the authors who contributed essays to this volume—in addition to Vivian Endicott Barnett and Angelica Jawlensky Bianconi, those include Jill Lloyd and Roman Zieglgänsberger—have advanced our understanding of Jawlensky in important ways.

The designer for this catalogue is Judy Hudson, who has brought a strong sense of style and a keen eye to the material at hand. She worked closely with Peter de Kimpe, the exhibition designer, known for his bold use of wall colors, to find a suitable palette and approach for presenting the work of this extraordinary artist. We owe them both a debt of appreciation.

The Neue Galerie staff played a key role in bringing this show to life, including Scott Gutterman, Deputy Director and Chief Operating Officer; Janis Staggs, Director of Curatorial and Manager of Publications; Liesbet van Leemput, Curatorial Manager; Allison Needle, Chief Registrar and Director of Exhibitions; Julie Jung, Assistant Registrar; Erin Hauer, Graphics Manager; and Michael Voss, Head Preparator.

Finally, we wish to thank our Board of Trustees and our President and Co-founder, Ronald S. Lauder. As an ardent admirer of Jawlensky, he recognized the importance of giving this artist a major presentation at the Neue Galerie. His tremendous support and patient guidance are essential to all our many efforts.

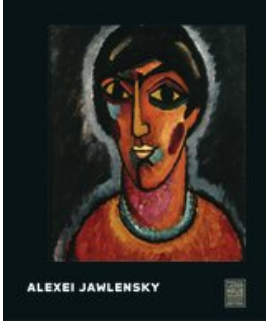
RENÉE PRICE

Director, Neue Galerie New York

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Vivian Endicott Barnett

Alexei Jawlensky

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Prestel

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Alexei Jawlensky (1864–1941) war Russe, lebte aber die meiste Zeit seines Lebens in Deutschland und erhielt 1934 die deutsche Staatsbürgerschaft. Er war ein Freund Wassily Kandinskys, den er in München beim Kunststudium kennenlernte, als sie Malerei bei Anton Azbë studierten. Jawlensky hatte enge Verbindungen zu deutschen Expressionisten.

Dieses Buch zeichnet die Einflüsse auf Jawlensky nach, der abgesehen von den deutschen Expressionisten von der Kunst Vincent van Goghs, Paul Gauguins, Paul Cézannes, Henri Matisse, von den Fauves und von Ferdinand Hodler beeinflusst wurde. Das Buch zeichnet die zeitliche und thematische Entwicklung von Jawlenskys Kunst nach, ausgehend von seinen frühen Figuren-Gemälden zu den Landschaften und von den Stillleben zu den späten ikonischen Porträts und faszinierenden Meditationen.

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